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to a boundless universe otherwise too strange to be faced.

Parents and schools can see to it that youth is supplied with definite skills and techniques, that potential interests go over into action. They can show young people how to gain objective happiness in creative work. They can so equip adolescence that it will not be left defenseless in the face of an adult world with only dreams to offer. The family can reduce the pull-back of childhood by encouraging economic independence, breaking away from home, going away to college, widening the social interests to extend beyond the family circle. The parents can keep their love for the child objective and unselfish and welcome his growing independence and hetero-sexual interests.

Last and most important, if we are wise enough and grown up enough

ourselves, we can give the adolescent an interpretation of sex and human behavior which will enable him to face frankly his own cravings and inferiorities real or imagined and adjust to them in a positive, constructive spirit. Sex instruction as now provided in the public school is not equivalent to assisting youth to a happy emotional adjustment. Like Alice, one may know the facts of sex and hate them. Can we provide parents and teachers so well adjusted and understanding that they can take the adolescent at the critical moment and through their own courageous and positive attitudes show him the way, for not only does he need to face sex and learn to look forward to love and marriage, he needs even more to accept himself, honestly and frankly, to recognize inferiorities and abilities and learn the lesson of compensation!

The Behavior Problems of Atypical Children

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THE purpose of this article is to suggest certain practical methods of dealing with atypical children. In determining what is meant by an atypical child, we may approach a definition from the standpoint of certain physical and mental tests or we may reach a definition by a study of the child's career in the world thus far. The definition reached by the first process is as follows: An atypical child is one who upon examination is found to be seriously deficient in one or more of the abilities essential to social fitness. The definition reached by the second method is: An atypical child is one whose social reactions indicate that he is seriously deficient in that which ex-

perience shows is essential to social fitness.

For our purpose we shall follow Porteus and include in the term, social fitness, "earning capacity and learning capacity which contribute to self-support; temperament, disposition, judgment and common sense, which are factors in self-management, inhibitions of anti-social instincts and impulses which lead to self-control."

In our own work, we have given exhaustive physical and mental examinations and have paid careful attention to the social history of every child. The minimum staff required for the proper study of a child in our opinion is as follows: a competent social

worker, a skillful pediatrician, a well-trained and experienced psychologist, accurate observers, a psychiatrist with a thorough medical training and a director who should have the necessary training and skill to enable him by a process of careful synthesis to edit and combine the findings of the various specialists into what may be called a unified diagnosis.

CHARACTERISTIC BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS

In the great majority of instances children are brought to our Department of Child Study because they present behavior problems with which those who have immediate charge of them do not feel competent to deal. Upon my desk at this moment I have two letters which will serve to illustrate this statement.

In the first letter, we are told that William is seventeen years old, is in the junior class in high school, exceptionally bright, has a fine face and figure and is very courteous and considerate. He does not run away, neither smokes nor drinks and is apparently without bad habits with the exception of that habit which occasions the very serious problem that brings him to our attention. In the words of the applicant, William is just a plain, everyday liar. He will borrow money of anybody with no expectation of repaying it. He borrows it when he has no use for it himself and having obtained it will lend it or give it away. He will go to stores and get goods, and has no hesitancy in having them charged to his father or to anyone else, when there is no necessity for it.

In the second letter, we read that Martha Elizabeth, a girl of seventeen years of age, lies, steals, runs away, is disobedient, is insubordinate at times, is "queer," has marked tantrums, is cruel to other children, is retarded in school work and presents certain sex problems.

The problems presented by these two children are certainly serious and perplexing and quite beyond the ability of their parents to solve. These letters illustrate the further point, that children are brought to us because of the very practical bearing of their behavior upon their own welfare and the welfare of the families with which they are connected. There is very little general interest in any type of "queerness" which does not have a direct and immediate bearing upon social fitness. If there are other abnormalities in children which have no such bearing, they may be interesting as subjects of study but they do not concern us in the present article. These two cases illustrate still other features. In both of these instances, as in practically every case, the problem child previous to our first interview has been "studied" by relatives and neighbors, and attempts more or less intelligent and persistent have been made to correct the abnormalities presented. It is doubtless true that in the great majority of instances children have been bettered by the sincere efforts of their parents to discipline them, but occasionally it happens that fatal mistakes in discipline have been made and the condition in which we find the child is beyond any hope of remedying so far as our efforts are concerned.

The final fact illustrated by both of these cases is this: In practically every instance the problem child, previous to our first interview, has built up a system of defense and has persuaded himself either that the behavior which has led him into difficulty is really of no special consequence or that it is so common as to be expected, or is the fault of someone else. In the case of older children, even those with good mentality, it is often a very difficult task to discover the child's real condition and to make it clear, when such a course is

advisable, that attempts to rationalize misconduct are disastrous.

STATEMENTS AND ACTUAL FACTS IN THE CASE

However, after attempts to understand the child and to discipline him on the part of parents and other relatives who have done their best or their worst, the child at length comes to us. The two questions which are asked of us at this point almost without exception are these: What is the matter with this child and what can be done about it? In an attempt to answer these questions we turn first of all to a social worker. At her hands we require data which will give us a knowledge of the child's developmental history and, as far as possible, an account of all the child's reactions to its environment from birth to the present day. We desire to find out all that can be found out about the child's inheritance, for heredity still plays a part in a child's career, notwithstanding the fact that we have great difficulty at times in determining just what that part is. If it were possible to know all that there is to be known of a child's heredity and of his career in the world thus far, the data furnished would enable a competent psychologist more certainly and more accurately to arrive at a just diagnosis than is possible as a result of any system of formal mental testing without such data. We need, therefore, as accurate and complete knowledge of all the significant facts in the case as we can obtain. These facts are suggested by the terms—heredity, development and career.

At this point it may be well to indicate the wide difference which sometimes exists between statements made concerning the child and the actual facts in the case. This discrepancy is well illustrated in the study we have just made of a girl fourteen years of age

who came to us accused of cruelty to little children, untruthfulness and dishonesty. From the testimony of the school teacher, we got the statement that Julia had stolen a ring. In conversation with a foster mother, we were told that Julia had stolen clothing. Another foster mother said that Julia was very cruel and abusive to the little baby in the home. These statements are all in black and white, preserved in our records and further dignified by the term, "verified data."

What were the facts in the case? The ring in question, which beyond doubt had been in Julia's possession for a time, was a rather crude affair made by a child out of a five cent piece. One day at school the owner of the ring asked Julia if she would not like it and upon receiving an affirmative answer gave it to her. Julia found it too large for her but wore it when she retired and lost it during the night in the bed-clothes. The next morning the original owner of the ring, not intending to part with it forever, requested its return and was told that the ring had been lost. The whole matter was then taken to the school teacher, an inexperienced young girl, eighteen years of age, born and reared in the neighborhood. Upon no data at all except the conflicting statements of the two children, this teacher reached the conclusion that Julia had stolen the ring and so recorded it and so wrote us.

The story of the stealing of the clothing was next investigated and it was discovered that only one article of clothing, namely, a linen collar, had disappeared when Julia had left this home. The foster mother had packed Julia's effects and had inadvertently put the collar in the child's dress-suit-case.

There was rather more to the story of the cruelty to a baby. The baby in question turned out to be a child be-

tween four and five years old, a husky, untrained, fractious little fellow, whose mother, failing to get on with him, had turned him over to this fourteen year old girl. From all accounts, the girl managed the baby rather better than its own mother, but resorted at times to corporal punishment, though not to such an extent as to injure the child in any way. The so-called "verified data," had been deemed sufficient to raise a very serious question as to the advisability of attempting to place Julia in another private home.

When our study was completed we found that Julia, while she had suffered much from her environment and from frequent changes in her home, was a girl of excellent mentality with a good social and ethical code, giving promise of attaining unto an unusual degree of social fitness, under proper treatment.

This case serves to illustrate, as I have said, the wide divergence at times between statements regarding the child and the actual facts of the case. It sometimes happens that the facts are very much worse than the statements, and at times the contrary is true.

NECESSITY FOR COMPLETE HISTORY

The necessity of getting a complete history of the child is well illustrated in the case of Henry, a boy of seventeen years of age, brought to our attention within the past year. The complaint made against him was that he was mischievous and inclined to amuse himself at the expense of other people. He was very fond of telling startling stories which, however widely they might differ in other respects, were always characterized by this feature: that the central place in the picture was occupied by the narrator. Neighbors dreaded to have this boy about and rightly or wrongly charged up to his account practically all the troublesome mischief done in the community.

At first glance the situation seemed to be covered by the explanation that here was an active boy without a reasonable program, who proceeded to fill up his time with such activities as occurred to him and whose tastes ran along the line of troubling other people. His habit of telling startling stories seemed to be explained by the fact that having no actual experiences of his own to make his conversation interesting, he exercised his ingenuity in inventing interesting and startling situations in which he always played a prominent part. For instance, when an aeroplane noisily sailed over our heads, he remarked that he had lost interest in aeroplanes; he had been up in them so many times that there was no novelty in it any more—the truth being that he had never been in an aeroplane in his life. A summer squall blew over the lake. He declared that he had been in the worst of it (though he had not) but that this squall was nothing to one which he experienced on the coast of Maine, where, during one afternoon, he, with one other to help him, pulled fifteen hundred lobster pots out into deep water so that they should not be destroyed by the fury of the waves. We recognize, of course, a somewhat selfish and wholly uncontrolled desire to occupy the center of the stage whenever possible. If one should wish to find a native instinct at the root of this habit, he might speak of the desire for approval and display which seemed to be developed to an abnormal degree in this youth. The necessity for inventing situations in which he is the praiseworthy and central figure roots itself in the poverty of the boy's actual experiences.

If, however, we had stopped here we should not have reached the very serious root of his difficulty. Further study revealed the fact that at the age of seventeen he was still in the first year

at high school, that he had not made his promotion clearly and fairly since he graduated from the sixth grade. He had been practically expelled from school because he claimed that he had sold a very large number of tickets to a school entertainment but could not produce the money for the tickets, the fact being that he had never sold the tickets but desired to have the glory of being a leader in that respect. Inasmuch as he would not produce the tickets and could not produce the money, trouble ensued.

It was further discovered that ever since his birth this boy had been the peculiar pet and pride of an over-indulgent mother. Times without number his mother had credited him with clever sayings and deeds which, as a matter of fact, he had never said or done.

The diagnosis in this case is fairly clear. The prognosis is rather dark. The boy is still his over-indulgent mother's pet. He sees no fault in himself, and in his mother's sight he is exceptionally fine. The case offers a good opportunity of formulating what might be called a psychological sequence. First, we have a native mental defect which is the central and determining fact in the case. Superimposed upon this defect is a long period of home life and training which could scarcely have been less fortunate, including, as it does, constant overstatements of the imaginary cleverness of the boy's sayings and doings, which have resulted in an utter lack of appreciation of the importance of truth telling and the beauty of modesty. In our opinion, had greater wisdom been shown by his parents, the boy could have been trained to a fair degree in the appreciation of truthfulness and modesty. The next link in the chain is an increasing unreliability and braggadocio, and the distaste for all serious work. The idle hands of a high grade moron easily find much

mischievous to do. The other social reactions in the case are precisely what one might expect, all the facts being known. The parents are well-to-do people who would not for a moment consider a new home for their child and who cannot be made to see the mistakes which they have been constantly making.

IMPORTANCE OF THE CHILD'S MENTAL CONTENT

After the formal physical and mental tests have been given, there is no part of the scheme of child study more important or more fruitful than that of carefully ascertaining the child's present mental content. By that is meant the discovery of such of the child's ideas as are fixed, or are tending to become fixed, with the emotions which are associated with them. The social and ethical codes which the child really accepts, although his behavior at times may be at variance with these codes, are of great significance. It is very important to get, if one can, the child's interpretation of his own behavior, for, after all, anti-social conduct such as lying, or stealing, or truancy or disobedience, may have a very distinct meaning to a child which is not all the meaning which appears so obvious to his seniors. Our studies here afford numberless illustrations on this point.

When is a deviation from the truth, a lie? A boy sees one elephant in a circus parade. Three days after the circus has left town he is overheard telling his playmates that he saw two elephants, and is promptly reproved for saying that which is not true. At the funeral services of his grandfather held three days after this episode, he hears his pastor make this statement: "I see the soul of the departed attended by legions of welcoming angels sweeping through the pearly gates into the new Jerusalem." No one thinks of reproving the preacher for a statement of this

kind although it is absolutely devoid of truth. The minister never saw any such thing. If called to account, he would say that he saw it with the eye of faith, but he would be sorely put to it to explain to a boy of fourteen just what the eye of faith is. My contention is not that the minister should be punished for making a statement which has no basis in known fact, but that before the boy is punished for saying that he had seen two elephants, he should be given an opportunity to give his own interpretation of his statement. Possibly he saw two elephants with the eye of faith. At all events, he saw one more elephant than the preacher did angels. Under proper guidance many a child can give a better explanation of his behavior and can disclose more accurate data bearing upon his mental life than can be gathered in any other one way.

At least two mistakes are to be avoided when one attempts to ascertain a child's present mental content. The examiner must not play the part of the conjurer who puts the rabbit into the hat that later on he may extract it therefrom. In other words, the examiner must not suggest to the child's mind ideas which questions may bring out of it later on. In the second place, the examiner must keep a perfectly open mind himself until the evidence is all in. Otherwise, he will be in danger of forming a premature opinion which will make him desirous of getting either facts against the child or statements favorable to the child. When an opinion has once been formed it is quite natural for the examiner to discover data to substantiate that opinion. No part of the task of studying the child requires greater patience, fairmindedness, knowledge of the world and the ability to evaluate data than that with which we are now dealing.

We make no reference to the psycho-

analytic methods connected commonly with the name of Freud, not because we underestimate their importance but because the whole subject has frequently been handled with much more skill and knowledge than the present writer possesses and any satisfactory statement would require much more space than is at the writer's command.

Also because of lack of space we shall not present in any detail the work of the psychiatrist, but shall merely state that the psychiatrist's study of the whole field of the child's personality is of the utmost importance in determining the proper diagnosis and in suggesting treatment.

FINAL DIAGNOSIS

When the reports from the social worker, the pediatrician, the psychologist, the observers, the psychiatrist and others interested are in, the director, whose duty it is to edit these findings and to reduce them to a unified diagnosis, will find himself in the possession of a considerable amount of data of various kinds and of all degrees of importance. He must first of all diligently eliminate from consideration all that does not have a bearing upon the question of social fitness. What remains must then be carefully evaluated and interpreted. The relation of one fact to the others must be carefully determined. The diagnosis finally reached must be the natural sequence of that part of the data furnished which is thought to be of chief importance, or which has to do with those abnormalities which have contributed to the problems presented in the child's behavior. Just as the physician in diagnosing a case presented to him would not consider a patient's politics, his religion, or certain harmless birthmarks, but would make his diagnosis of pneumonia upon a careful consideration of data bearing upon physical

disease, so in the solution of behavior problems we must confine our attention to data bearing upon the nature and solution of problems in that field. The diagnosis is the succinct, comprehensive and definite conclusion reached by a consideration of the data in the field concerned. In other words, the diagnosis should, as far as possible, satisfy the just demands of all significant data.

A concluding word must be said in regard to follow-up work. It is most exasperating to expend time and effort in an attempt to reach a just diagnosis in a problem case and to suggest methods of treatment which promise well for the child concerned, only to find that there is no one available with

sufficient interest or intelligence to carry on the treatment suggested. All too frequently the findings of psychologists and psychiatrists have been placed in the hands of relatives or friends who either fail utterly to understand the findings or are unable to carry out the directions given as to the treatment of the case.

In child helping organizations of the better sort nothing is more noticeable and nothing is more encouraging than the increasing skill of those to whom is given the task of dealing with atypical children. Under the best conditions we have failures enough to keep us humble and successes enough to convince us that we are on the right track.

Public School Provision for Exceptional Children

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IN the consideration of certain problems of child welfare we are apt to forget or to undervalue the importance of our public school system. Our vast aggregation of elementary schools ought to be regarded, however, as our largest and, in a sense, our most legitimate child welfare agency. Certainly the historic sanction and strategic position of the public school system in the American commonwealth make it the most promising instrument for the further development of public policies in behalf of a very large proportion of those exceptional children who because of handicap or other circumstances need a special measure of extra parental care during the years of their education.

A few statistics will convey the broad outlines of the national situation. The figures are rounded but sufficiently accurate for the purpose in hand. There are twenty millions of children enrolled in the elementary public

schools of the country. These children are provided for in over a quarter of a million of buildings with a valuation of two billions of dollars. The personnel of this vast plant consists of over a half million teachers, supervisors and superintendents, and, in city districts, of about three thousand physicians and school nurses and sixteen hundred truant officers. The welfare of no less than three quarters of a million of physically and mentally handicapped children is affected by the policies of this huge institution.

A complete classification of handicapped children would include all those children who, by virtue of exceptional circumstances or by inherent or acquired constitution, deviate so much from the normal as to cause a special status to arise with reference to their educational and social treatment. Sometimes the courts determine when the special status exists; sometimes it